ing forward a road map for the future. The two sides have maintained a high level of engagement to strengthen understanding and expand mutual beneficial co-operation on a wide range of bilateral, regional and internatonal issues in pursuit of their shared goal of transforming Indo-US relations. For this purpose, established a high level bilateral economic dialogue on trade policy, commerce, finance/investment, energy and environment.

(e) Enhancement of bilateral trade and investment is an ongoing and continuous process. The two sides share a commitment to further expand Indo-US trade and investment ties.

Foreign Agencies Issuing ISO Certificates

3870. SHRI B. P. SINGHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there are several franchisees of Foreign Certifying Agencies issuing ISO certificates;

(b) whether such franchisees are audited by their Accreditation Council for their operations in India;

(c) if not, whether it would not dilute the norms of ISO and quality standards and thus lower the credibility of Indian ISO certifications;

(d) whether there are any guidelines issued by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) prohibiting operations of certification as well as consulting services under the same umbrella; and

(e) if so, the action Government have taken to detect the violation of the above guidelines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENMAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. Government are aware of the several Franchisees of the Foreign Certifying agencies issuing ISO certificates.

(b) As per information available with Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous body under the Department of IPP, responsible for accredition of certification bodies in the country, certification systems of such franchisees are not being audited by their respective accreditation bodies regularly. There is no information available with QCI regarding the arrangement of such franchisees with their parent certification bodies

and how the transactions of the local franchisee are audited by their parent certification bodies.

(c) and (d) While in some cases the dilution of norms of ISO certification and quality standards may be possible, there are specific IAF guidance document to the ISO/IEC Guide 62 and 66 that clearly describe the non-permissible relationship between certification and consulting services.

(e) The responsibility of monitoring the certification and consultancy relationship is the direct responsibility of the respective accreditation council.

In case any of the issues related to malpractices in the certification process with accreditation from foreign accreditation bodies is brought to the notice of the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), a part of Quality Council of India (QCI) along with appropriate evidences, NABCB takes up the issue appropriately with the foreign accreditation and certification bodies.

The process of certification to ISO 9000 and IS014001 standards is voluntary and not mandatory worldwide. The entire certification process of ISO 9000 and ISO 14001 in the world is under the supervision of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), an organisation formed by the accreditation bodies of the different countries of the world as members. The Multilateral Arrangement (MLA) of mutual recognition governs the process of mutual recognition of the certificates accredited by the accreditation body members of IAF.

Through the membership of IAF, NABCB has brought to the notice of IAF the deteriorating standards of certification having accreditation from the foreign countries. Based on the efforts of NABCB. IAF is working for specific guidance document on the cross-frontier accreditation, which will help of improving the standards of the certification in India.

Trade Agreement with the EU

3871. DR. A. R. KIDWAI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Agriculture and Commerce Ministries' proposal to EU that India is ready to buy their Airbus aircraft provided the EU should be ready to buy sugar from India has been agree upon by both the countries;